

Dark Horizons

Issue 14 • Summer 1976







Produced and Edited for the BFS by Stephen Jones.

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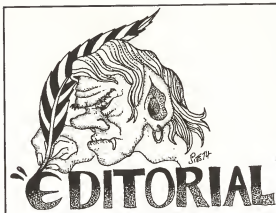
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By
stephen
jones

Firstly, I must apologise for the blank space on page 20 last issue, it was due to a printer's error and was not noticed until after the magazine had been completed, and by then it was too late to substitute another illustration. There were also more than the usual number of typographical errors in issue 13 - this is the fault of sloppy editing - and I hope this issue is an improvement.

Now onto the contents for this, the first of two "special" DARK HORIZONS' I'll be producing: the first half of this issue is the usual mixed-bag of features: Mike Chinn contributes the third, and concluding, part of his History of the Death-Days, with the final battle between the lizards and the True-men for possession of the dying Earth. Jon Harvey, one-time editor of BALTHUS and now the guiding force behind Spectre Press (Jim Pitts' H. P. Lovecraft portfolio, and CTEULHU, a new fiction magazine, are currently available under this imprint), looks at the way Fantasy has been presented in the Theatre; I don't agree with all of Jon's comments, but the article is an informative study of an often neglected method of presenting the genre. In DARK HORIZONS 9 John Martin - editor of the excellent ANURIL - contributed an amusing UNKNOWN-type story of the supernatural, he returns this issue with an off-beat science-fantasy in very much the same vein.

Brian Lumley is probably one of this country's most respected fantasy writers (although his work continues for the most part to be unforgivably neglected by British publishers); Mike Barrett and Dave Sutton present an excellent retrospective of this author's career to date: an appraisal of his writing, an exclusive interview, and an extensive bibliography with notes completes the second half of this issue. (This feature will also subsequently appear in Harry Morris' fine American zine, NYCTALOPS). I'm also very pleased to be able to reprint a couple of Brian's lesser-known tales: Mother Love, which was originally in WITCHCRAFT & SORCERY (May 1971) and was illustrated with the same Steve Fabian drawing I've used on page 27, and Problem Child, which first appeared in Roger Elwood's anthology, VAMPIRES, WEREWOLVES & OTHER MONSTERS (1974).

With this issue I feel my artists have all surpassed themselves, I will say no more, but allow their work to speak for itself...

I still need contributions - especially articles - and please remember to include a s.a.e. when you write.

Now read on, and enjoy...

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and the Grasshopper shall Be a Burden

The trees are falling leaves
In my heart, as the rain
On the shore, at the dawn
Of my death.

At the gates, where the lost
Of the earth linger on,
As their minds slowly turn
Into dust.

By the sun, as it dies,
Born is love, born of man,
Who in life turns the earth
From the light.

By the dark of the moon
Falls the rain, in the heart
Of the seed of the corn
Where it lies.

In the night comes the frost,
Deeply into the hearts
Of the cold and the proud
As they stand.



marion
pitman

The Glade of the Forgotten



Here woods are heavy with shadow green
And scented winds usher along the breasts.
Here rills effervesce in their tumbling speed
And kingfishers flash like naiads to their nests.

Here mansion ruins seem magically still
Like unattainable heaven to vines escalading.
And niches with ferns like emerald crowns
Where vipers as sentinels from balconies serenading.

john hurley



The Second Dragons

By Mike Chinn

part three: The Closing Of The Days

The screams and deafening sounds of bloody battle echoed from the eroded walls of Wennilas. The few lizards that guarded the city were hopelessly outnumbered by the avenging humans who had suddenly appeared out of the night; and totally surprised. As the tide of battle swung inevitably against the reptiles, even the apathetic True-men imprisoned within the city found new heart as old memories returned and past deeds were remembered; and, as though prompted as one, the few knights that still lived found weapons and attacked the reptiles that had robbed them of their humanity.

One of the younger knights: Ton-Dar, fought his way to one of the strange humans and shouted: "Who are you? We owe you great thanks, but cannot place you!"

The other, a young man dressed in flowing robes, pulled a scarf from around his mouth and replied: "I am Hinyrr, of the ten tribes of Mojal! You have legends of us, I believe?"

"Aye!" called Ton-Dar in surprise. He hacked savagely at a lizard's throat. "Why do you come?"

"Later!" came the shouted reply, as Hinyrr disappeared amidst a whelter of blades.

The remaining lizards were butchered. They fought insanely to the last, even though their battle was lost, simply through their wish to destroy all humans.

When the last bloody scaled corpse fell to the crimson-stained sand the Mojal cried in triumph; while the knights and their fellow captives stood dazed: it had been many years since they had fought, and now, after the surge of emotions that had driven them back to their pride, they were drained and strangely tired.

Everyone collected in the central square of the city, chattering in excitement or in utter silence, and faced an old man who sat on cushions atop one of the low buildings that lined the square. He gazed down at the knights and their fellows and spoke. He spoke quietly, with a voice old beyond his appearance, yet everyone strained to listen. Those farthest away found themselves holding their breath so they could catch every word.

"For many centuries the Mojal have not deigned to contact the other humans of earth, preferring our own peaceful ways to the wars between cities. When the lizard-men appeared, we likewise avoided them; so that we became nought but legends to both sides.

"But Aubeq-Senn has learnt of our existence, and, not seven days past, he attacked my tribe with a large army. Therefore our choice was clear: either join the knights of Wennilas against Aubeq-Senn, or be destroyed by him. We chose the former alternative.

"For six days we collected together as many tribes as we could; messengers still hunt for the other six. We have rescued you of Wennilas from your prison, and returned your pride with your hope. We will now wait here for Aubeq-Senn, and destroy him when he comes!"

A deafening roar of approval tore from the throats of the Mojal, while the other True-men felt a new surge of optimism that brought smiles to their lips; for many the first they had ever smiled in their lives.

"And who are you, to whom we must give our thanks?" cried a voice.

"I am Thulin, sorcerer of the Mojal."

"Will you stay to witness Aubeq-Senn's death?" asked a Mojal warrior.

"Nay," replied the sorcerer. "I must journey north to a meeting that could decide the final victor of the coming battle one way or the other." He stood slowly and descended to the sandy ground. An squar was brought to him and he mounted.

"Farewell!" he cried, although few could now see him. "May Xanine be with you in the coming fight." He spurred the reptile forward through the assembled ranks, who parted respectfully, and rode through the open gates of Wennilas.

Tonn-Dar and his friend Koor-Dar walked the battlements together. They gazed out at the

unbroken chain of shifting dunes that glittered faintly under the morning sun.

"Thulin was confident of the coming battle," said Koor-Dar. "Are you?"

Tonn-Dar stared blankly at the sands for long moments, his eyes shadowed under the horned helm he had never removed for thirty years of knighthood. At length he spoke slowly.

"Nay. These past thirty years my will has been sucked from me by failing hope. Last night the Mojal attacked and three decades of frustration were released in a few moments; now, there is nothing. Hope has returned, of a sort, so I will fight; but life no longer matters to me: I died thirty years ago my friend."

"Then I am unhappy for you, my friend," said Koor-Dar. "My own pride has returned after thirty years, and I intend to avenge my loss of manhood!"

"You are lucky, then." Tonn-Dar turned his attention to the people below him; those to whom freedom had been a dream, and now they had it they believed they still dreamed. "I wonder if the rest think as you?"

Hinyrr the Mojal smacked his lips and slammed his empty flagon onto the table. All about him men and women of four of the tribes danced and laughed merrily. As usual, when different tribes met, they celebrated wildly.

"I had thought the city-dwellers grown soft and indifferent through their imprisonment," he cried. "Yet today they fought as well as any of us."

The one at whom he spoke shrugged. "Aye. Perhaps the return of hope gave them back their spirit."

"Or perhaps Thulin lent a hand?" He laughed at the joke, but the other merely smiled politely.

"I think you do not jest, in truth," he remarked quietly.

Hinyrr continued gayly as if the other had not spoken. "And where do you think our worthy sorcerer has gone? Eh?"

"He did not say; but I believe he seeks Salin Thur."

"That wizard? By Xanine, why should he bother? Salin Thur is no longer any threat to any man."

"Indeed? The other pursed wry lips at some private joke. I think you are wrong."

"Eh?" Hinyrr gazed at his empty flagon and called for more ale. "What was that?"

"Salin Thur disappeared thirty years ago, just before the city-dwellers were driven to surrender. It is well known that Aubeq-Senn spent the last fifteen years looking for him, and Thulin believes he succeeded: how else did the lizards learn of our existence?"

"Yet why did he disappear? He has never owed much loyalty to Aubeq-Senn, therefore we can assume he went without instructions. So: he has purpose of his own; but what?"

"I don't know!" Hinyrr sounded offended.

"Neither does any other man; except perhaps Thulin."

"Yet why should it worry him? If Salin Thur has his own ends they will not affect us, surely?"

"If Salin Thur has a purpose, you can be sure that it will affect True-man and lizard-man alike."

Salin Thur stood at the mouth of his cave and awaited Thulin as he dismounted. He gazed at the Mojal with eyes that contained neither hate or fear, but a mixture of both; and yet another.

"Then you live?" hissed the lizard.

Thulin smiled mirthlessly. "Aye. Your scheme half worked: Aubeq-Senn was defeated, but I remain living."

"No matter. I will kill you myself." The lizard clenched his long claws.

"Will you?" Thulin advanced several paces. "If you could you would have done two years past; yet you did not. Aubeq-Senn was sent to kill me instead; he also failed. Admit death, Salin Thur; you cannot change your written future."

"No lizard will ever surrender!" snarled the other. His tail whipped savagely and his teeth bared. "My work is begun. The death of a wizard will finish it."

"And well you know whose death it is to be, lizard," mocked the human. He advanced once more. With a bestial snarl Salin Thur extended his left arm and a bolt of azure blue blasted out, to flash away from Thulin like children's fireworks.

"We are evenly matched, lizard. Only your asoteric knowledge gleaned from the Upper Worlds can defeat me; yet you cannot use it, because that would destroy you."

"I need no special knowledge for such as you!" Another blue flash sprayed harmlessly off Thulin's body. Then it seemed that a pale yellow sphere appeared about the human and began

to expand slowly until it touched Salin Thur. The lizard ecreamed and leapt back as though from extreme heat.

"Do you now see that you cannot destroy me?"

"Mayhap, human; but neither can you kill me!" He spun about and leapt onto a standing stone. "Tetragrammaton! El Adonai Elohim!"

"Useless words, lizard. Forces of good will never listen to such as you!"

"Indeed?" Blazing eyes turned to the human. "Acteus, Magaleius, Ormensus..."

Thulin gestured briefly and the rock upon which the lizard stood splintered into lethal missiles. "No more names, lizard! You do not recognise gods or demons!"

Salin Thur rose slowly to his feet. "I'll take no more, human! I have laboured many years for this; you will not thwart me now!"

"And what have you laboured towards?" asked the old man.

"Earth has roared too long. I have the power to bring back the rains, to make the sands fertile again. Soon Aubeq-Senn and the True-men will fight and destroy themselves! Earth will be mine: green and fertile!"

"I had thought reptiles incapable of insanity, Salin Thur," said the human softly.

"But you are as mad as the ideals of the humanity you so despise. No one can be totally destroyed by the battle that rages at this moment. Either man or lizard will remain alive."

"Then let it be lizard!" Blazing energies burst from Salin Thur's body and Thulin was now forced back, his yellow shield destroyed.

"Aubeq-Senn will die this day!" screamed the reptile. "As will Koor-Dar, Kanis-Rann, Tonn-Dar, Grynnor, Welyne and...and...." his voice faltered.

"And Salin Thur! Say it, wizard! Say it! You have seen the future: pronounce it!"

"No more!"

The lizard's voice rose to the deafening roar of his giant ancestors. "Thulin the Mojal will die! He whose name is fully Thulin Sar; he who is my Astral double!" He raised his arms in a hideously painful way to the sky. "By the Knowledge I own..." But he never finished the invocation.

A sudden convulsion shook his scaly body and he appeared to crumple in on himself until his body, now nothing more than skin stretched on bone, folded to the sands.

A sound, both scream and laugh, belched from the cavemouth; it rose in pitch until it was a child's wail. Thulin stared in fear at the gaping blackness, not daring to think what occurred inside. Another groan echoed from under the rocks; and then silence.

Thulin Sar collapsed in utter weariness upon the ground and waited.

The lizards attacked at noon that day. None knew how they learned of the fall of Wennilas so swiftly; but it scarcely mattered. Survival was all that mattered this day.

Hundreds of reptiles hurled across the dunes at the walls of the city, heedless of stealth nor the arrows that rained down in black wedges. The humans were grim, for three more Mojal tribes were yet to come, and the lizards outnumbered them sorely.

Like countless ants the lizard-men swarmed at the walls, many falling, but many more living and erecting scaling ladders. They surrounded the three gates and hacked them to splinters with almost mechanical determination. They clambered up the ladders and spilled over the walls like a ebbing tide; hacking and thrusting blindly. The human defenders fell back to the ground level as the vicious shock of the attack struck against them.

The lizards ecreamed in rage, triumph and bestial blood-lust. The humans were silent, save for the occasional command or shouted encouragement.

Then the battle began truly.

The lizards rained from the scaled walls, burst through the gates and clashed against the True-men. Steel sparked on steel and iron splintered wood. Flesh was ripped and screams tore from bloodied throats. Reptilian roar fought with human cry.

Through the entire city the battle ranged: in wide avenues men and reptiles pressed close together as though seeking comfort in crowds; on flat roof-tops scattered groups fought lightning duels, with the losers plunging to the heaving crowd below; assassins lurked at windows and doorways, ready to strike down any foe that came within reach of bow or sword.

And all this while Aubeq-Senn sat astride an equar at a gate of Wennilas. He surveyed the battle with grim pleasure, for the lizards were winning. What had prompted him to heed the prophetic dream of the previous night he did not know; yet, neither did he care.

In the city this battle had become a series of small personal fights. Lizard fought man with more regard to rules than in the opening moments.

Koor-Dar found himself opposed to a tall thin lizard who wore the garb of a highly eet-

seemed officer: this was Kanis-Rann.

They fought across a wide roof-top, squally matched in skill, savagery and weariness. Koor-Dar used sword and axe in rapid alternate strokes that forced Kanis-Rann ever back on the defensive, for he had only sword and light shield. Yet the pace began to tell on Koor-Dar. His attack slowed and he found it more difficult to use the heavy axe with only one hand; while the lizard could return lightning-swift reposte to his blows, unhampered as Koor-Dar was with heavy armour.

Finally, in disgust, Koor-Dar threw his axe at the lizard and took his sword in two hands. He rained blows on the lizard, who yet managed to ward them off easily with his shield. Kanis-Rann struck rapidly with his sword, and caught the knight heavily on his helm. Stunned by the blow, Koor-Dar hesitated for a second, and in that time the lizard put all his strength into one thrust, and ran the knight through the join between helmet and gorget.

The lizard laughed briefly and turned to leave, only to run into Hinyrr. The Mojal did not have time to even plan his blow, but merely acted on impulse as he glimpsed the lizard's body. Kanis-Rann's head bounced across the roof a second later.

The battle wore on many hours. The lizards had taken the advantage and the bodies of the True-men greatly outnumbered their's. Of the city-dwellers, not one child or woman remained alive and the men were greatly reduced.

Aubeq-Senn watched still. Some of the fighting had trickled out of the city and duels were fought across the dunes; but the lizard leader had avoided any conflict thus far. He sat gazing at the fighting men as though entirely devoid of any interest in the outcome; whilst savouring the victory he believed was already his.

Yet even as he gazed he heard the sounds of marching men and snorting equars. He spun about in the saddle and saw close on five hundred humans converging rapidly on the city: the remaining Mojal tribes.

He spurred his mount through the gates and bellowed as loudly as he could:

"Regroup! Prepare to be attacked! The humans have more allies!"

Those lizards that heard took up the cry, and the humans' spirits lifted. They carried the fight back to the reptiles, giving them no chance to prepare. So that when the Mojal cavalry swept through the gate all lizards were blown away like sand before a strong wind.

Lizard after lizard was mown down before the avengers; those that escaped the flashing swords of the mounted were thrust back by the now triumphant city's defenders onto the blades of the foot-soldiers entering Wemmilas.

Aubeq-Senn, cursing at his defeat, cut down man after man as they neared him. Fighting alone, he seemed to have the strength of three lizards. A path cleared before him and he galloped madly towards the city's third gate.

But even as he neared it something struck him from behind and he fell heavily to the ground. Immediately a knight was upon him, sword aimed at the scaled throat.

"Seeking escape, Aubeq-Senn?" snarled the figure.

"To regroup my forces," replied the lizard. His claw closed over his sword's hilt.

"What forces?" The knight laughed, but there was no humour in the sound. "You are defeated, lizard! Admit it to yourself!"

"Never!" The lizard's sword flashed out and knocked the other away. Aubeq-Senn rose rapidly to his feet. "Who are you, knight? I would like to know who I kill."

"I am Tonn-Dar, lizard. I remember you well, from thirty years ago: when you fought us out in our caves and promised us our lives." They exchanged blows for some seconds, each gauging the others' skill. "I have lived these past years with but one aim: to kill you."

"Then your chance has come too late, human. You are not young by your standards."

"Neither are you."

They began to fight; Aubeq-Senn, although heavily-built, was fast and skilled, while Tonn-Dar fought with no apparent regard for his own life. After a minute's fighting the knight's armour was dented and split, while three large cuts fed blood down Aubeq-Senn's arms, and his body was a mass of fine slits.

The end came as Tonn-Dar suddenly left his neck wide open to attack. Aubeq-Senn slashed eagerly, and saw the steel bite home; even as the knight's own sword slid neatly through his heart. The two gazed at each other for long moments; Tonn-Dar's eyes shining with triumph, Aubeq-Senn's reflecting disbelief.

"Your lizards are doomed, Aubeq-Senn," croaked the knight. "Even as you."

"Not so," murmured the other. "Nature does not create and then turn her back on her creations: humans' continued existence proves that. Lizards may be defeated now, but we are not vanquished."

Tonn-Dar tried to shake his head, but collapsed in a lifeless shape upon the sands. The body of Aubeq-Senn fell across his not two seconds later.

The battle ended soon after the death of the lizards' leader. The streets of Wennilas were choked with the dead and dying. Not one reptile body remained with life still in it, yet neither had any city-dwellers survived.

The Mojal survivors gazed about them in a collective daze. The unhurt and lightly wounded did their best for the more serious cases; but for many their battle was over.

Hinyrr sat on a pile of wood and stones that had once been a wall. He stared blankly at the death that stretched before him down every street. The greedy sand, slaked once the night before, drank deeply again.

"So humans triumph," murmured the Mojal to himself. "But at what cost?"

"Nothing can be won without loss also," said a voice above him. He looked up and dimly recognised his drinking partner of the previous night.

"The city-dwellers lost all," Hinyrr said bitterly. "Grown soft as they had, they fought hard still."

"Their day is over," said the other, sitting next to him. "The earth is now the Mojal's, for it is no longer the same earth."

"Indeed? It looks no different to me."

"It will, in the years to come. Salin Thur began this game, but Thulin has won it. But he, too, has paid."

"Thulin is dead?"

"Nay. But he will no longer be seen on earth. It is murmured that the death of sorcery is upon us, and science will take precedence once more. If so, it will be a sad time."

"I care not any longer!" snarled Hinyrr. He looked at the other suddenly. "You seem to know much, stranger; yet I do not know you. Who are you?"

The other stood and smiled, the first true smile Hinyrr had ever seen from him. "I am me," he replied. He began to walk towards one of the gates.

"Yonder the clouds gather; the rains will fall soon. When it does: remember Thulin. And remember his summoning on the night Aubeq-Senn attacked." He stepped through the gate and turned behind a wall. Hinyrr leapt to his feet with a cry and ran to the gate, gazing at the sands beyond. No one was to be seen, nor even the faintest footprints.

Hinyrr began to tremble, and fell to his knees.

"Xanine?" he whispered hoarsely.

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆



equus sapiens

"Thou hast the mind of a malicious child".

a sorcerer once said to me.

I did not kill him out of malice,

but of curiosity.

To see how he tasted.

christine v.
powers

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆ MISS ☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

FANTASY IN THE THEATRE



by Jon M. Harvey

This article has been written in reply to Michael Sims' article, *The Emotion of Fantasy*, in DARK HORIZONS 11, within which Michael dismisses the Theatre as a competent medium for Fantasy. His statement to the effect that, "It is difficult to create the correct emotions of Fantasy for a stage play," and his reference only to a stage production of DRACULA imply an unconscious limitation of Fantasy merely to Horror, with respect to the Theatre. There is a broad spectrum of Fantasy subgenres upon which to comment in connection with the Theatre.

The public, in general, have a grave misconception of the Theatre. Whilst most towns possess a cinema, only a major town will possess a theatre - even that in a surrounding dominated by the cinema. As such, this concept of the Theatre is one of an acquired taste, mainly restricted to the upper classes. While one may be able to sneak into a cinema wearing the most casual of clothes, the theatre will permit only those in formal dress. The entertainment provided in such establishments is mainly limited to the Opera, Shakespeare and other 'highbrow' stuff, only letting down its hair to present a pantomime, a variety show or a Brian Rix farce.

This concept is far from being correct, as more and more people are discovering when, as a special treat, away from the television and the cinema, they enter the world of live theatre. Opinion is, thankfully, changing, as is evinced by theatres - only a few years ago considering closure - now thriving in the new boom of audiences disillusioned by the other media of entertainment. While plays presented on television are being performed in theatres - plays by Osborns, Pinter and Shaffer - they are far from being the sum total of the Theatre's output. Both the television and the cinema present a very false impression of what their minor rival is like and presents. John Osborne's ludicrous plays, surprisingly still admired by many, have been filmed, enhanced only by big-name stars, while BBC television seems to limit its PLAY OF THE MONTH to Wilde, Shaw and Chekov, becoming avant-garde once in a blue moon with a play by Strindberg or Genet.

Live entertainment is far from being as limited as it is generally believed. In fact, it has many advantages over the 'dead' media of the television and the cinema. The most important advantage of the Theatre is the 'immediacy' of the media. One of the main features of the 'dead' media is that there can be no direct relationship between actor and audience. The screen upon which both television and the film are projected is a barrier, like Alice's looking-glass, with the exception that one cannot walk through it into the world behind. In Theatre, there is no barrier, especially in the 'new' theatre based on Shakespearean lines, where both actors and audience are intermingled. If conviction was required of this fact, a view of the same production, once live and once on television, would more than suffice.

Athol Fugard's play, *SIZWE BANSI IS DEAD*, has been performed under such circumstances, both with exactly the same cast and sets. BBC, in its infinite wisdom, after seeing the success of this play in the theatre, presented it on BBC2. The theatre version was a success, the television was not! The play presents a lengthy introductory monologue, explaining in story fashion the situation of the play action. Placing a television screen between the actor and his audience, all contact, 'immediacy', was lost; and it was no fault of the actor in question. Martin Walker, of the *GUARDIAN* said, of the theatre performance,

"John Kani and Winston Ntshona are two young actors working professionally for the first time, and last night, acting with an intensity and flair that is beyond words, they gave us a performance of rare brilliance I can think of nothing in London to rival it."

Irving Wardle, of *THE TIMES* said,



"A wonderful piece of theatre - the piece is marvellously performed...this is a great tour de force."

This last piece says all: "A piece of theatre." There must be no confusion between the different media of entertainment. How many times has a book of either Fantasy or Mainstream literature, been transformed into an appalling film? Look at the Poe and Lovecraft films; Stoker's DRACULA has seen numerous versions in film with one only coming close to the atmosphere contained in the novel. Shelley's FRANKENSTEIN has not fared so well! As shown by the Poe and Lovecraft film versions, a considerable amount of alteration must be made to the stories before they can be convincingly portrayed on celluloid, and even then the conviction is somewhat dubious. Stories do not become comic-strips and the comic-strip, possibly the most liberated medium for the presentation of Fantasy, does not become either literature, cinema or theatre with any degree of conviction. In fact, the comic-strip hero is a ridiculous character away from its maternal medium.

Thus, the Theatre is a medium with its own limitations and advantages. Fantasy, therefore, as any other narrative form, must be born in, rather than adapted to the medium. With the increasing popularity of the Theatre, a considerable number of Horror-orientated plays have been performed. A number of them, as reported in WORLD OF HORROR, are adaptations of established figures of Horror: Jack the Ripper, Dracula, Frankenstein, Dorian Gray and even the Phantom of the Opera. In each case the horror of the theme has been displaced by something more attractive to the general theatre-goer - Jack the Ripper, Dracula and Frankenstein as musicals and all greatly stressing humour, although the last does go a long way to conjure up the atmosphere of mystery and horror, in the production viewed by the writer, before deteriorating into the mundane. THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW was created within the medium of the theatre and is, as such, by far the most satisfactory of these theatre horrors so far seen by the general theatre-goer. How good is the film version? It will probably join the number of theatre successes, such as GODSPELL and JESUS CHRIST, SUPERSTAR, that do not come over on film.

THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW is a musical farce. What of actual horror in the Theatre? Let the term of 'horror' be revised to one that adequately describes the emotional feeling usually mistaken as 'horror' - terror. Terror obtained from a situation of Fantasy is manifested as any other form of Fantasy in Theatre: not from a situation created to present terror, but as a product from a theatrical situation. The Cardiff Laboratory for Theatre Research are a group of actors/dancers from greatly varied backgrounds formed to research theatric expression. It is unfortunate to observe that their mode of expression in performance does not alter, as if their present mode is believed to be the ultimate form of expression. It is not, but it is interesting to see that the basis on which they work is the expression of terror at the audience and projecting terror into the audience. Two recent and excellent productions were based upon classical themes in terror - Jack the Ripper in NIGHT HAWK and Coleridge's Rhyme in MARINER. In each they do not adapt, as have certain theatre groups, but have retained only the basic concept of each and have built new stories along theatrical lines. Terror wells up out of each production, especially from the figure of the Night Hawk, portrayed by an ex-member of R.A.T. Theatre, a bizarre character in himself.

The Theatre has its own writers in Fantasy. Of these, the greatest progenitor of the weird, of terror, is the French neurotic, Antonin Artaud. He spent most of his life in pain, brought on by meningitis. He devised what is known as the "Theatre of Cruelty" and spent the latter part of his fifty-two years confined to various mental hospitals, dying of rectal cancer. Both his plays and his other writings are full of marvellous images of mental terror and the despair that little can be done to rectify horrifying situations; he relates of the pains that he feels and suffers within his body and of the despair that they will only cease at death:

"A sharp, burning in my limbs; muscles knotted, as if raw, feeling like glass, brittle, tear, cringing at movement or noise...Genetic fatigue, the feeling of dragging ones body about, the feeling of unbelievable fragility becoming splitting pain...numbness localised in the skin...a thickening heat band gripping the whole surface of my skull...head trampled by horses."

A comparison with, say, Franz Kafka would be too mild.

Other playwrights have also employed Fantasy: the beautiful, the bizarre, the witty and the terrifying. Brecht, more than any other writer, has had a profound influence on all aspects of modern theatre, both through his plays and through his theories. He was a communist in a fascist Germany, a person who saw "man's inhumanity to man". His plays were fantasies



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Theatre because they were written for that medium. Transfer them to another medium and they die, like fish out of water. Not only does each survive in the medium of Theatre, but the medium makes them possible. The Theatre exists and they exist because of the Theatre.

The trend of the 'young theatre' of today appears to be 'experimental'. This is not the scene of flickering discotheque lights, somebody playing discordant music while one person chants dubious poetry and two others of indiscriminant sex copulate in front of the audience although, unfortunately, some misguided 'theatre' groups think it is. They do not last long. Experimental groups are splinter groups from the more established Theatre who realise that the full extent of theatre has by no means been explored. The Cardiff Laboratory are such a group. Another is the much acclaimed Scottish, 7184 group whose historical documentary of the exploitation of Scotland, THE CHEVIOT, was another play televised by BBC2. Again, while the television version was good, the advantage of television over live performance tempted the director to revise the presentation greatly to 'broaden' the play, to the detriment of the piece. The experimental theatre group can be anything from bordering on the legitimate theatre, through to the outre and the obscure. Much of their production revolve around Fantasy.

The experimentalists take on greatly differing forms of production. The duo, Sal's Meat Market, create through sheer professionalism, the imagery that produces in the minds of their audience a cast of thousands. Their individual range of characterisations are immense, while their sets are sparse to non-existent. Their energetic fun, their mime and character changing create vivid scenes, no matter how ridiculous they would appear if confronted in reality. This is their type of Fantasy. Their ACCIDENT IN THE ATOMIC FACTORY is the most Fantastic of their pieces, to date, but their best by far is the latest, PHIL TEDDY'S FUN PALACE:

with messagee, an insight into the self-torture of the human being, yet Fantasies are what they remain, long after the message has been forgotten. In fact, so good are his Fantasies that Harry Nilsson employed the theme of one of Brecht's plays for his own Fantasy, THE POINT.

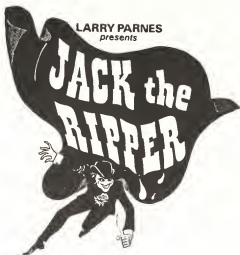
Fernando Arrabal is the only Spanish playwright of note. Like all great theatrists, he has a preference for a certain type of theatre, a certain form of expression. His theatre is the ceremonial - ritualistic - theatre which he calls "Theatre Panique". The phrase is derived from the god Pan, who combines the notions of rustic vitality, grotesque fun and holy terror. Pan also stands for ritual - a ritual of wild exuberance which transcends all rules of decorum and, indeed, good taste. His plays are, thus, highly ceremonial, each character performing as if a certain rite. Sometimes it does not matter which character performs the rite, as long as it is performed. This is evident in his play, PICNIC ON THE BATTLEFIELD, in which his two opposing soldiers are virtually indistinguishable, even in name - Zeppo and Zeppo - and interchangeable in role. Arrabal's influences are Lewis Carroll, Kafka, Camus, Faulkner and Steinbeck and each manifests himself in certain of his plays. ORISON, a duet in theatre, is pure Carroll. CAR CEMETRY, an allegorical piece whose title is a play on the name, Gethsemane, is Kafka, Camus and Steinbeck, as is LABYRINTH: all greatly fantastic and terrifying. PICNIC ON THE BATTLEFIELD is a mixture of Kafka and Carroll. The two stretcher bearers that keep appearing to enquire of any corpses, then disappearing again, are pure Macabre. The play works well as a written piece, but the malevolent evil of War over the setting is much more manifest in its presentation.

All these plays by the various writers are pure Fantasy, of one level or another. They work in the

"This new Meat Market show is a stunner. With slow, meticulous care Hassett and Ratzenberger build up the illusion of a new snob restaurant, the brainchild of a heavy used-car salesman. And then they break it up, with an extraordinary joyful energy. This two-man show, based originally on improvisation, employs a vast cast of hooes, yobs, cops, nutters. Rarely, in the history of the theatre, has so much been done by so few." TIME OUT.

Alec Guinness has nothing on them!

"They create shows that are peopled by a crowd of characters vast enough to make Cecil B. DeMille reach for his cheque book." EVENING STANDARD.



The reverse of Sal's Meat Market, who employ little but themselves, is the 'mixed media' Theatre which is as its title implies. Moving Being are a group who employ mixed media theatrical effects in an endeavour to obtain as much as possible out of what they do. It is basic theatre with the addition of film and stills projected off various portions of the set, mime, dance and music, the latter both classical and modern, recorded and live. Many purists dislike this 'cluttering', but it works well. Strinberg wrote what he called A DREAM PLAY, a Lewis Carroll influenced piece about the daughter of God visiting the world of reality, distorted only by her own confused mind. It remained unproduced until Moving Being, because it was considered 'unstageable'.

As such, mixed media theatre extends the limits of normal theatre, but creates further problems and restrictions, such as the necessity of very strict timing and choreography. It is not, cannot be performed as normal theatre and is exciting because of this. Moving Being's latest piece is an adaption of Susan Sontag's psycho-fantasy drama, DEATH KIT, failing to impress as much as their other works because of it being an adaption still trying to cling closely to the original novel. However, feeling of mental disorientation is greatly apparent in the production. There is one scene in particular, in which the protagonist is confronted with spectres from his own mind, portrayed as dusty, walking corpses in a mausoleum. The effect is a most hair-raising scene.

Finally, there is the Fantasy of puppets. Again, there is a great misconception that puppets should either be on strings, sticks or hands. The further the puppet is divorced from its operator, the better it is. Actually, the reverse is the truth: the closer the puppet the more versatile its motions and the more humanlike its expressions and gestures. In fact, the human body complete is itself a puppet - defined as 'mime'. The Black Theatre of Prague is the most internationally famous progenitor of mime and puppetry, their brand of Fantasy being unique. However, some of the most spectacular visual Fantasy comes from the Cardiff based Caricature Theatre, itself internationally famous. While the Black Theatre is adult, the Caricature Theatre is orientated towards a young audience, but not to the exclusion of adults enjoying their Fantasies. The Caricature Theatre employs many varying forms of puppet, from the conventional marionette to the human body. Their stories are entertaining and their costumes, like their performances, beautiful! Their production of THE PHANTOM TOLLBOOTH, spectacular beyond imagination, shadowed the cartoon version. Another of their shows, PANACHE, is soon to be presented on BBC, at the time of writing, so those lucky enough to have seen the programme will have some understanding of Fantasy in the Theatre.

I have tried to portray the variety of the Theatre to emphasise the fact that it cannot be ignored. It is difficult to express some idea of any form of Fantasy within the Theatre without having to limit the discussion to one aspect, even one production only. The scope is great, much greater than herein portrayed. Fantasy is alive and well and living in the Theatre!



HOLE-MEAL

by
John Martin

"Listen," Harvey continued, as he and Ed went through into his apartment, "in this neighbourhood, Pattie's is the only place to eat. She keeps a clean house and serves good wholesome food. Why, those other bums, if they didn't pay off the..."

He stopped short as he caught sight of the sight that had caused Ed to stop listening to him several seconds earlier. There in the wall facing them was a large perfectly circular hole about four feet in diameter.

"What the hell!" bellowed Harvey, "Didn't I tell you about this lousy place! How many times I tell that echmuck of a landlord this place is rotten. Now it's falling down around my ears. Lookit that...!"

"Say Harvey," Ed interrupted. "Didn't you say that Sol Greenburg lives in the next apartment?"

"Uh? Yeah, Sol lives there...so?"

"So isn't that grass I see through the hole?"

For the first time Harvey looked beyond the hole rather than at it. Slowly he said, "Yeah, you're right. Grass." Then, his voice rising once more, "Damp, this place is dripping damp. I told the landlord that too. Does he listen!"

"Harvey, damp is damp, but you don't grow that kinda grass in an apartment...and that sure looks like sky."

Harvey looked at Ed, then again at the hole, hard, and his anger turned to fear. "Hey listen Ed, you're right, that looks like sky. But if that is sky we see, then this building must've partly collapsed. We gotta get outa here before the rest goes!" Gripping Ed tightly by the elbow he began to back slowly out, pulling Ed with him.

"But the grass Harvey, the grass," protested Ed. "If the building's collapsing and we see sky, how come the grass. For Chrissakes, this is the middle of New York city, Harvey, and we're ten stories up. Besides, it's 11.30 p.m., and that's sure as hell daylight through the hole. Harvey, I don't think that's New York we see, neither do I think we see Sol Greenburg's damp apartment."

Harvey paused at the door still gripping Ed's elbow. "If it ain't New York and it ain't Sol's apartment, what is it? Whatever it is, I don't like it. A hole appears in my wall and what's on the other side isn't what should be. I'm gonna call the cops!"

"Hold it Harvey. Before we call the cops, maybe if we went across and took a look through the hole? I mean, we might have a better idea what to tell them. Maybe we might not have to call 'em. Who knows what's on the other side."

Harvey hesitated. "I don't know. If it is New York out there, then we're in trouble, an' if it isn't...we could be in even worse troubles. I don't like it Ed, holes don't just appear in walls without reason. Maybe the cops..."

"And maybe we should just take a look first, right?" Ed moved cautiously across the room with Harvey, still gripping his elbow, in tow.

"Looks like a meadow; with flowers even." He peered closer but without actually putting his head through the hole. "Don't seem to recognise 'em though. Hey Harvey, that's regular countryside!"

"Ten stories up in the middle of New York! How regular can you get. You don't think it's some sort of illusion; a mirage, that kinda thing?"

Ed snorted. "On your apartment wall? Gimme something will ya, anything, we'll see just how much of a hole this hole is."

Finally letting go of Ed's elbow, Harvey handed him a crumpled cigarette packet.

"There she goes," Ed whispered excitedly as the packet landed in the grass on the other side of the hole. "If that's a mirage then they've improved on the special effects. Look at it lying there Harvey, on the other side, maybe the first piece of litter that's ever been there. Hey, that makes me feel something inside. A first; y'know, like the first guy on the moon."

Harvey looked at him quizzically. "Ok, so you're an original litterbug, what now? It isn't New York, it isn't Sol's apartment, and now it isn't an illusion. So what is it? Where is it?"

"It's a new world, Harvey." Ed whispered, almost reverently. "Just look at it, a green and beautiful new world. And it's just waiting for us."

"Hey, come on now, whadda you thinking, and just forget the 'us'."

As if he had not heard, Ed continued in the same quiet voice. "Just like when I was a kid. My mother used to take us out into the country for picnics. D'you know that; to meadows just like that, only they'd have regular daisies. Harvey, I can smell the air, smell it Harvey, ain't it sweet, an' listen, birds, you can hear the birds."

Harvey listened and sure enough there was birdsong, and a waft of soft warm air brushed his cheek. Before he realised what was happening, Ed had thrust his head through the hole.

"Ed!" squawked Harvey, "Come outa there!" But Ed took no notice, so Harvey grabbed him by the pants and pulled. Reluctantly, Ed removed his head.

"Harvey, it is beautiful! The meadow just goes on and on, and there's hills and things, and the sun, the sun is warm, Harvey. And you can hear a stream nearby. Harvey, I'm going through."

"Don't be a dumbhead," Harvey cried. "Listen Ed, think about it. A hole appears in my wall and it leads to another world; so why? Holes just don't appear like that. What's really out there? Anything might be. How you gonna protect yourself? What you gonna eat?"

Ed had a silly quiet look on his face and he answered softly. "Cool it Harvey, cool it. Everything's fine out there. Ain't nothing to worry about, plenty of food and drink just waiting and no dangers, no worries. Harvey, it's a whole new world, paradise waiting just for us."

"Us," repeated Harvey. "You can count me out Ed, and if you've any sense, you don't go through there either. Hell, it ain't natural, it could be a trap or something. What's the matter with you anyway, it's like you're drunk or something. I'm calling the police."

The silly quiet look vanished and Ed flared, "Call the cops, dummy, but I'm going through. You stay here and cry your heart out baby, I've had it with the routine, I'm getting off, understand! We've been given a chance, and I'm taking it. I'm going out there!"

With that he began to climb through the hole. Harvey grabbed at his jacket and Ed backed-hand him across the mouth.

Looking out from the other side of the hole, Ed was apologetic. "I'm really sorry I hit you, Harvey, but I had to come through. Man," he breathed, turning a full circle, "you should be here to believe it, it really is something. Harvey, come on. Together we can live it up. A world to ourselves, no more rush and grab and do as you're told. Cumon Harvey."

Harvey considered. It certainly looked good over there and what did he have here that was so great. A lousy job, no money, a two-bit apartment that grew mushrooms under his bed. He was almost at a decision when he noticed the change.

"Ed, the hole, it's closing up. Ed, come on, will you get out of there before you're cut off. Cumon now!"

Ed smiled at Harvey's urgency. "Not this time, Harvey. Let the hole close and goodbye to that world for good. It's your choice, Harvey, and you better make it soon."

Harvey backed off a step. He did not know. If only the hole had remained open he might have gone over, but the irreversibility of it was somehow too final for him.

The hole was now diminishing rapidly. If Harvey failed to make up his mind quickly he would lose the chance, as Ed was urgently telling him. Harvey stood there unable to make a move, until finally he said, "Bye Ed, good knowing you and good luck." The hole was too small now for Harvey to change his mind.

"Bye Harvey. Luck." And the hole closed.

For a few moments Harvey stood looking at the wall wistfully, regretting now his inability to make a quick decision.

He was wondering what Ed was doing when the noise occurred and the wall gave a ripple. Harvey screamed and turned and ran. Out of his apartment, down ten flights of stairs and into the street, all the time screaming. He was still screaming intermittently when they led him away.

"Sure is funny," the cop said to the lieutenant who had just arrived.

"So make me laugh, Zimmermann," the lieutenant replied.

"That guy who's flipped his lid. Between screaming out his lungs, he tells me this story how his friend had climbed through this hole in his apartment wall that led into another world."

"Weird," the lieutenant said.

"Yeah, but there's more. Seems the hole closed up on this other guy on the other side and our friend, the guy who's flipped, is standing there thinking like how he shoulda gone through too, when the noise happened."

"What noise, Zimmermann."

"The noise, lieutenant, that blew our friend's mind. Seems the wall belched!"





BRIAN



LUMLEY:

Latter Day Lovecraftian

A FICTION SURVEY, INTERVIEW AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

by Mike Barrett
& Dave Sutton



1 - fiction survey

The summer 1968 issue of *THE ARKHAM COLLECTOR* included an interesting and well-written story entitled *The Cyprus Shell*, which marked the first professionally published work of the young English writer Brian Lumley. Since then, the publication of a volume of collected stories and three novels, as well as many appearances in various periodicals and anthologies, have established Lumley as a first class talent steadily building a reputation in the fields of both the standard macabre tale and, more specifically, as a writer in the Cthulhu Mythos vein.

Lumley is a particularly innovative writer insofar as the Mythos is concerned. He has taken the standard Lovecraftian trappings - the Elder Gods, the Great Old Ones and their minions, the forbidden books and so on - and supplanted them totally into the 1970s, integrating the Mythology with the atomic and space age, an updating that succeeds surprisingly well. It is in fact perhaps a sign of the inherent strength in the Mythos pattern that it is capable of such adaptation.

This modernisation in concept has become increasingly apparent in the author's recent work and includes an interesting move away from the idea of 'Gods' in a semi-mystical sense. In this rationalisation, the Great Old Ones are imprisoned by mental rather than physical barriers, and the 'magical' chants and incantations, Elder Signs and so forth, are nothing esoteric but simply devices which act in conjunction with mental and genetic implants. It also transpires that some of the well known deities are no more than symbolic; Nyarlathotep and Shub-Niggurath, for instance, are not physical or metaphysical beings at all, but abstractions of the powers of telepathy and fertility respectively, whilst Azathoth is seen to be representative of nuclear force, the original 'Big Bang'.

Lumley takes no liberties in arriving at such conclusions - he carefully and logically extrapolates from Lovecraft's writings. Some of the Mythos mystique may be being peeled away with these cosmological revelations, but much is still left: Yog-Sothoth, for instance, "co-existent with all time and contemporaneous in all space", imprisoned in the fifth dimension and existing at every point, both physical and temporal, in that dimension, and (Lumley's own inventions) Shudde-M'ell, "a gigantic, sentient, subterranean slug", Yibb-Tstll, "gigantic, grotesquely man-like lord of an alien dimension beyond the borders of sanity".

The destruction of some of Lovecraft's mystique can both make the Mythos more acceptable under the harsh glare of today's science and cosmology, but it can also have the opposite effect of updating the Mythos out of its own fictional existence. Mr. Lumley has trodden along this tenuous thread between the two possibilities and, largely, has succeeded in not toppling fully into either camp. Specifically, the relating of Azathoth in *THE BURROWERS BENEATH*, with the 'Big Bang' theory of cosmological evolution, is a brilliant innovation, since it fits in with Lovecraft's descriptions of Azathoth rather well. This modification is strikingly perceptive of the author, yet the same novel (wherein the plotting suggests that people in 'high places' are working in secret unison to rid the world of the Cthulhu Cycle Deities and have unlimited means at their disposal) tips ever so slightly into that absurdity which Lumley is, or should be, trying to avoid.

Similar inconsistencies intrude at points in *THE TRANSITION OF TITUS CROW* with for instance the revelation that the Channel Tunnel, finally under construction in 1979, is protected against the Deep Ones by means of the Mekatonic University's mass-produced star stones being placed in the fabric of each section of the tunnel. *TITUS CROW* is perhaps the least satisfactory of Lumley's novels; while being an acceptable and entertaining book in itself, it introduces into the Mythos elements that do not comfortably gell with what has gone before, and tends to steer an uneven course between science fiction and fantasy. The identification of the Elder Gods with physical, alien beings living on a planet of structures supported by anti-gravity devices and additionally inhabited by talking dragons, intelligent centipedes and a sentient Tree, have the effect of drawing the tale completely away from the atmosphere and tone of the Mythos, a distinct move from the esoteric inventions of Lovecraft to the more mundane levels of science-fantasy adventure.

If *THE BURROWERS BENEATH*, *TRANSITION OF TITUS CROW* and the unpublished *DE MARIGNY'S DREAM-QUEST* form one continuous aspect of Lumley's Mythos and its relative contemporisation, so too does *BENEATH THE MOORS* and its precursor, *In The Vaults Beneath*, although this latter short story is not a prequel. They do together show, however, another facet of Lumley's reworking of the Mythos, the main difference with these two being that the Mythos is less irruptive and in *BENEATH THE MOORS* hardly intrudes at all. *In The Vaults Beneath* does span right back to Lovecraft's *AT THE MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS* and even has hints of more contemporary Mythos fiction, notably Colin Wilson's *THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE*. However, like HPL's own

stories, the horrors are more personalised and submerged in mystery (unlike the fast-action, science fictionalised drama of *BURROWERS BENEATH*). In fact, none of the monstrous deities or their minions actually appears in this tale of an outpost beneath the Yorkshire moors. The raw Shoggoth tissue is still sentiently bubbling, but is never seen. It is, in fact, like *BENEATH THE MOORS*, a quest story, utilising the thrill of discovery, lost subterranean caverns and artifacts of a pre-diluvian, non-human civilisation, to build up to the final horror, which in itself is well handled but does not concern the appearance of a Mythos 'God'. One could say that it suffers from some unevenness and perhaps Brian Lumley does not bring off the thrill of finding bizarre artifacts in a strangely litten outpost, contenting himself with general references to the 'clutter' strewn about; but one can see the development from that to the far superior *BENEATH THE MOORS*.

This novel is a big step away from his previous work. We see here no Cthulhu Mythos revelatory concepts and in fact the author chucks overboard nearly all the trappings usually associated with a Mythos story: the proscribed books, the deities and so on.



Instead we have a novel which draws its major source from Lovecraft's The Nameless City and The Doom That Came To Sarnath. The doom wrought upon Sarnath having come from nearby Ib and its sister city, Lh'Yib still lurks beneath the Yorkshire moors and is the setting of the novel. As in THE BURROWERS BENEATH, the author has incorporated one of his short stories into the framework of the novel, thus The Sister City absorbs HPL's Sarnath tale into the Mythos when heretofore it was not.

For all this mention of the Mythos, we are treated more to a fantasy in the vein of two Lovecraft stories mentioned above, in which the major portion of the novel relates the 'dream-phases' of Professor Swart Masters. BENEATH THE MOORS entertains the reader by the immensity of the fantasy journey through the bowels of the earth in which monstrousness and awe-inspiring vistas greet the reader at every turn. Lumley has evolved much from In The Vaults Beneath, since his later descriptions in the novel far exceed those of the short story, and, of course, in the novel he has room to use his writing ability more fully.

There is a pleasant consistency to the overall plan of BENEATH THE MOORS, the dream adventures of Masters, the prefatory notebooks, the psychiatric report and final assessment by Masters' cousin all linked by three supposedly separate characters: Robert Krug, discoverer of the sister city, Bokrug, the reptilian creature who takes Masters into the nighted world of Thunn'ha, and the mysterious Dr. Ruben Kruger, who engineers the escape of two scaly-skinned 'lunatics' from Oakdene Sanatorium.

BENEATH THE MOORS, though an adventure novel set in the metaphysical world, does have moments of horror: the huge subterranean pit amongst blackened, slime-covered bones of men and other things. However, the lucid descriptions of the strange, aeon-old corridors beneath the moors, neither regions of twisted limestone labyrinths and eerily populated caverns are what makes this novel so appealing and on a different level than anything else Lumley has written.

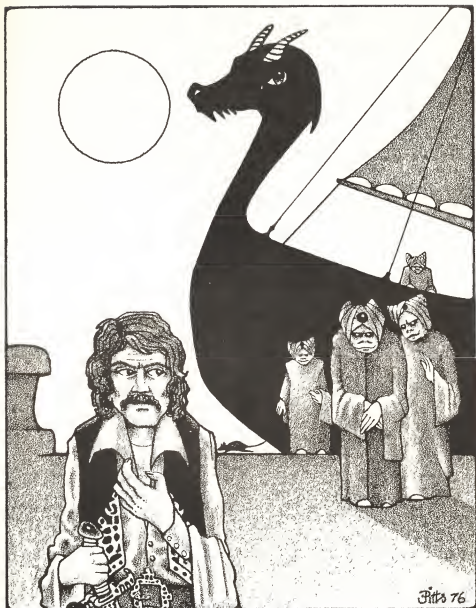
This inclination towards the use of the Mythos as a concept which is more adjunctive than integral is also demonstrated, although in a somewhat different manner, in Dylath-Leen and The House Of Cthulhu. In these stories Lumley has reverted to the more pure fantasy orientated and Dunsanian of Lovecraft's tales, which culminated in the excellent DREAM-QUEST OF UNKNOWN KADATH, but again not content with pastiche, there is further innovation in the astute blending of this fantasy style with Cthulhoid horror; this produces, most notably in The House Of Cthulhu, an intriguing and excellently handled combination which has the overall effect of a darkly fantastic nightmare.

There is, however, still ample room in Lumley's world for the more standardised and straightforward Mythos tale and in this area alone he has produced some fine work, one of the most recent of these to be published being Born Of The Winds. Whilst outwardly this novelette conforms to the accepted and expected Mythos pattern, it does emphasise two aspects of Brian Lumley's writing that may not to date have been too apparent, these being his descriptive power and his ability to develop and sustain a compelling and suspensefully atmospheric plot. Set in the northern reaches of Canada, and dealing with the return of Ithaqua the Wind Walker, to claim the son he begot twenty years earlier, the vivid impressions of intense cold and savage storms howling across bleak, white landscapes are very effective. The story grips, from its first paragraph, throughout the whole of its 20,000 words, and the final scenes of Ithaqua's return and its consequences are superb. This must rank as one of Lumley's best stories, and the fact that it is intended to be the first part of a 110,000 word novel entitled SPAWN OF THE WIND suggests that the latter is a book to be awaited with some anticipation.

Brian Lumley is a very readable author with an easy, flowing style, although he does perhaps over-emphasise at times with the use of too many italicised words and exclamation marks. Tape recorders and letters tend to play a large part in the structure of his writing, notably in the novels - this device is most effective in THE BURROWERS BENEATH but less so in THE TRANSITION OF TITUS CROW where use is made of the 'gaps in the tapes' ploy which produces a slightly disjointed and unconvincing fourth part of the book.

In much of Lumley's fiction the names of Lovecraftian characters recur: one of the principals of THE BURROWERS BENEATH and THE TRANSITION OF TITUS CROW is Henri-Laurent de Marigny, the son of the de Marigny who featured in the Silver Key stories of HPL. Professor Wingate Peaslee will be another familiar name, and it is the Wilmarth Foundation (after Albert N. Wilmarth) that is set up to seek out and destroy the Cthulhu Cycle Deities. To the library of forbidden books we find added the "Cthaat Aquadigen" and Joachim Feery's "Notes on the Necronomicon"; these, and the previously mentioned beings Shudde-M'ell and Yibb-Tstll, as well as Arthak't and G'harne amply demonstrate the penchant for the invention of evocative names that is essential for the Mythos writer.

Lumley has in fact been criticised in the past for his concentration on Mythos stories,



DYLATH-LEEN

"Why should those black galleys come in to harbour, discharge their four or five traders, and then simply lie there at anchor, emitting their foul odours, showing never a sign of their silent crews?"

which do in fact form a separate offshoot of his horror fiction, although some are in the Mythos and others not. The Cyprus Shell, of which August Derleth tells us in THE ARKHAM COLLECTOR that Lumley based the theme on Lovecraft's horror of sea food, was the author's first published story, which takes the form of a letter. It is not a Mythos story, but does mention the odd 'forbidden book' at one point (it is realised that for some people this mention does constitute including it as part of the Mythos). Because it takes the form of a letter it is understandably anti-climaxed at the end with a brief analysis, but the horror itself is well executed and forewarns us of the later Deep Sea Conch, which will be discussed below. Lumley's awareness of shellfish goes a long way to making this nasty little tale very credible and it also makes one wonder, in fact, whether the species of Murex described is a living reality!

Rising With Surtey, The Night 'Sea-Maid' Went Down and the more recent Haggopian form the three Cthulhu Mythos elements of the 'sea' stories; the first two of these exhibit Lumley's faculty for seizing upon modern day developments and happenings and incorporating them within his conception of the Mythos. Thus in the former two stories the emergence of the volcanic island off Iceland and North Sea oil rigs give both tales a firmly realistic basis on which to build the fictional terrors of the Cthulhu Mythos.

The Pearl, like The Cyprus Shell, is set in Cyprus and the settings are well delineated, planting the story excellently in a realistic milieu, although the climax, which one is led to with considerable expectancy, fades in the telling. However, it does again show the author's fascination with the aquatic world, especially gastropods and conch's and here we have some accurate descriptions of octopi in particular. This familiarity with sea-life gives Lumley an edge, for it opens a whole new dimension in the horror vein, even in Mythos tales such as Haggopian and the results confirm that the author has a real trump card in the telling of a horror tale. It is therefore a special pleasure to find The Deep Sea Conch, his most recent 'sea' yarn, a brilliant piece of gruesome. Meanwhile, however, in writing order, we have David's Worm, written a year earlier, a tongue-in-cheek story, not exactly fitting into his 'sea' stories in the strictest sense because it deals with a freshwater flatworm. A quite horrific little tale, but a trifle light on seriousness, which in this case has the effect of making the final italicised denouement - which one imagines Lumley intends to be horrific - rather humorous and laughable. However, an interesting departure, which shows the author's versatility in the medium.

The Deep Sea Conch takes the form of a letter and is in fact written as a 'reply' to the narrator of The Cyprus Shell. It is therefore not surprising that these two stories are the best of the non-Mythos 'sea' tales. Of the nasty oceanic invertebrates in this series of stories, the deep sea conch is easily the nastiest, the climax riveting the reader even though the author does not immerse the story in atmospherics. Mystery and the matter-of-fact manner in which Brian Lumley styles his character of the letter-writer disguise the hint which he gives of the impending horror. A very successful shocker.

There has been little in-depth characterisation in any of Lumley's writing to date, although his characters do have sufficient depth to retain the reader's interest. In the three novels, it can be argued that the mode of writing (via tape transcripts, diary entries etc.) precludes this, and that it would in any event be superfluous when descriptive content predominates, as has been appropriate in these novels, in the drawing of the greater picture of the Mythos and its development. But what has emerged here is that Brian Lumley is an entertaining and highly successful horror story writer. Indeed he has carved a niche in the sub-genre of the Cthulhu Mythos - something that would be hard to do for any contemporary author, considering the difficulties of creating originality within that framework. Unlike the '20s and '30s, when Lovecraft began to write in a fascinating and original medium of the horror story, the Cthulhu Mythos, to which many another writer added his own scraps of lore, today we find few writers emerging into a medium now saturated by previous decades of writing. One of these has been Ramsey Campbell and the other Brian Lumley of course and, surprisingly enough, both English writers. Campbell has moved away from the Mythos in the last few years, but Brian Lumley continues to devote much of his attention to Lovecraft's prodigy. His consistently high standard of writing and his ability to instill a freshness of approach and style in his stories augurs well for the future and suggests that Brian Lumley, already a good and respected writer in the genre, may soon become a great one.





MOTHER LOVE

by Brian Lumley

With a high-pitched whine the bullet took a long groove out of the rock wall to his right, showering him with sharp splinters. He flung himself awkwardly to the ground, feeling a splash of blood on his face where one of the hot, flying fragments had caught him. Simultaneous with the second crack of the rifle, another bullet kicked up dirt in his eyes with a buzz and a thud as it buried itself in the ground a few inches in front of his nose. He waited for a few seconds, blood pounding, before peering cautiously from his prone position along the narrow rock passage to where the girl stood - tattered denim moulding the fine shape of her wide-spread legs - squinting down the sights of her weapon...sights which were centered squarely on him!

"Lady, if you're planning to scare me you've done it already. If you're trying to kill me aim a little more carefully - I hate the thought of bleeding to death..." His voice carried to her, a hoarse, panting shout as she began to squeeze the trigger for the third shot. She eased her finger slowly out of the triggerguard to leave it lying there, a thought's distance away from sudden death.

"What are you after?" The way she said it - menacing, low so he could hardly hear - it was more than a question; it was a warning, and he knew he would have to answer carefully. Only sixty feet separated them and there was nowhere he could run. If she was any good at all with that rifle she could put a neat hole right through his head before he made five yards.

"Lady, I seen your fire-smoke earlier in the day, and I smelled your cooking a mile off. Smelled pretty good to a man who hasn't ate in three days - and when I did last eat it was a rat I was lucky enough to catch!" His panting came a little easier now. "But Lady, if you want me to move on... just you say the word and I'll be on my way. I'd be plenty obliged, though, if you'd allow me a bits to eat first."

"Get up," she ordered. As he climbed to his feet she stared at the stump where his right arm should have been. "You can't be a mutant - you're too old for that?"

He walked slowly, carefully up the defile, dusting himself off as he went towards the girl who was outlined now, against the evening greens and browns of the small valley behind her. She had a nice set-up here, and she was alone - otherwise she wouldn't be toting that rifle herself. As he drew closer to her he saw the cave on the other side of the valley. Could hardly be more than a hundred yards across, that valley; more a saddle between the hills. Corn patch growing nicely...mutant strawberries...rabbits. She had real

good legs...

- She saw where he was looking.

"Hold it right there." He came to a halt not ten feet away from her. "I asked you a question!" She swung the rifle to point it significantly at his middle.

"Mutant -? No, industrial accident, that's all - long before the war," he answered. "But I've been given the mutant treatment ever since. So has every cripple! Been kicked out of every town I ever went near for almost four years. It's no fun, Lady - 'especially now they're burnin' mutants! Look, if you've any decency at all, you'll give me just a bite of what you've got cooking over there, and then I'll be on my way."

She thought about it, began to shake her head negatively, then changed her mind; "You're ...welcome - but I'll warn you now, there's three unmarked graves in the corners of this valley. You try anything...I'll have no more corners left." She waved him past with the gun, taking a good look at him as he went. He was about thirty-five, forty perhaps. He'd probably put on age fast after the war. Feeling her eyes on his stump, he glanced back over his shoulder:

"Armleee, I be -" he said in wry humour, gratified to see her relax a little. Then: "How come you're up here on your own? You've been here some years by the look of the place."

"I lived in the town on the coast back there, where the walls shine at night," she gestured vaguely behind her. "That place at the foot of the hills, just a heap of rubble now, you must have come through it to get up here. I was only eighteen then...when the war came. One of the first bombs landed in the sea, threw radioactive water all over the town. When my baby was born he was - different. The radiation..." She faltered, lost for words. "...My husband died quickly. What few people lived through it wanted to have my baby put...they wanted to kill him. Said it would be better for both of us. I ran off. I stole the rifle, shells, some seeds and one or two other odds and ends. Been here ever since. I get along fine..."

"You still got the mu-?" He knew it was a mistake before the words were out. The air seemed to go hard.

"Mister," she poked the barrel of the gun viciously between his shoulder-blades, "if you're a mutant-hunter you're as good as dead!" He staggered from the pressure of the rifle in his back, turning to face her, going suddenly white as he saw her finger tightening on the trigger.

"No...! No, just curious. Christ, I've been hunted myself - and it's obvious I couldn't be a mutant! What, me? A Mutant hunter? Why? - some places there's a bounty, sure - but out here in the middle of nowhere? I mean...do I look like a bounty hunter...?" He was pathetic.

She relaxed again. "My baby...he...he died! No more questions." It was an order.

They had crossed the valley and the sun was starting to sink behind the hills. He peered eagerly into the pot hanging over the fire. The cave was a dark blot behind the glowing embers, with a home-made candle flickering at its back.

This was sure a good thing she'd got, he mused to himself, licking his lips.

She motioned with the rifle, indicating he should help himself from the pot. He took up a battered tin plate and heaped it with the thick bubbling stew before dropping the heavy iron spoon back into the pot. Juicy rabbit bones protruded from the meat in the mess of stew on his plate. Without another word he started eating. It was good.

As he ate he looked the girl over again. She had a good face to match her figure. He could hardly keep from staring at the way her shirt swelled outwards with the pressure of the firm breasts beneath it. And it was that above all else - the way her shirt strained from her body - which finally decided his course of action.

He licked his lips and reached casually for the spoon again, crouching with the plate on his knees...

In a second he had straightened and the hot stuff was on her neck. Before she even had time to yelp from the shock he had brought her a savage, whip-lash, backhand blow across the face with the swing of a powerfully muscled left arm. As she spun sideways he nimbly grabbed the falling rifle out of mid-air and turned it on her. She started to scramble to her feet, a red welt already blossoming on her face.

"Stay put!" He held the rifle loosely in his hand, confident finger on the trigger, daring her to make a false move. "I'd shoot you in the legs," he said, grinning wolfishly, "so's not to spoil you completely. You wouldn't want to be spoiled completely, now would you?"

She cringed away from him on the ground. "You wouldn't...you -"

"Get up!" he snarled, the grin sliding from his face.

As she made to get to her feet he tossed the rifle behind him and slammed another round-ly swinging blow to her face. She lurched backward, falling, and before she could recover

he stepped over her, planting his feet firmly, tearing the shirt from her supple body. "Thing was ready to bust anyway..." He licked his lips again as she screamed and tried to cover herself. "Shirt sure didn't tell no lie..." He grabbed her left wrist, twisting her arm up behind her back, forcing her to her feet. "Sweetheart, your feeding's good - now let's see what your loving's like; the Good Lord knows you've waited a long time!"

"Don't...! Don't do it. I fed you, I -"

"More fool you, sweetheart," he rasped, cutting her off, "but you may's well get used to me; I'm going to be here quite some time. You need a man about the place." He pushed her into the cave, noting that the candle at the rear stood beside a heavy black blanket, stretched luxuriously in a hollow on the floor.

The shadows moved in the dimness of the cave as he shoved her towards the sputtering candle. A few feet from the rear wall of rock she twisted under her own arm and pulled away from him. He laughed at the way her body moved as she tried to free herself. "No good getting all hot and bothered now, sweetheart - not with the bed all laid out for us..."

"It's not a bed!" she screamed, jerking her arm back in desperate resistance. The sweat of anticipation on his straining fingers let him down. Her hand suddenly slipped through his and he crashed backwards, off balance, onto the "bed".

There was an instant, horrible movement beneath him.

"No...!" the girl screamed. "No! - that's not stew, Baby - it's a man!"

But Baby, who had no ears, took no notice.

The edges of the "bed" rose up in thickly glistening, black doughy flaps - like an inky, folding pancake - and flopped purposefully over the struggling man upon it. Subtly altered digestive juices squirted into his face and muscular hardness gripped him. He gave a shriek - just one - as the living envelope around him started to equeeze.

Hours later, when dawn was spreading like a pale stain over the horizon between the hills, the girl was still crying. Baby had taken a long time over his meal. He burped, ejecting the last bone and a few odd buttons. There wasn't even a back she could pat him on.

That day there was a new grave in the little valley in the hills. A very small one...

2 - an interview

BL:- Brian Lumley; SB:- Dave Sutton & Mike Barrett.

SB: Firstly can you tell us how you became interested in weird fiction and in Lovecraft?

BL: My original moment of inspiration - of lasting interesting, fascination, in the literature of the macabre - came sometime when I was just a lad of, oh, maybe eight or nine years. My father had a copy of THE MAMMOTH BOOK OF THRILLERS GHOSTS AND MYSTERIES, (I've still got it), and a similarly massive volume whose title I've forgotten. Picture an imaginative lad of that age reading W. H. Hodgson's The Voice in the Night and A. E. D. Smith's The Coat!

As for my interest in H. P. Lovecraft: I bought my first Lovecraft book - a paperback, CRY HORROR - in Germany in late '61, I think. HPL's stories gripped me from the start. Here was a unique thing: a macabre writer with his own fascinating style, creator of a world of horror all his own and peopled with his own nightmares, who could write about such things as Shoggoths and a god-thing called Cthulhu (of all unlikely names!) and make them sound real and solid - make them frighten the reader!

SB: You yourself are of course primarily known as a writer of Cthulhu Mythos oriented stories. What exactly is it that attracts you to this aspect of the genre?

BL: My primary interest in the Mythos is directed towards opening it up. To stick to the stereotyped formulas would be to assist in the stagnation and death of the Mythos. I may well be blamed for doing unheard of things with the Mythos (and I'm not entirely blameless, I know) but at least I'll know that I didn't just stand back and watch the Mythos die for lack of fresh air! As for what it is that attracts me: I think the Cthulhu Mythos is a challenge. To write a good Mythos story is an extremely difficult thing. To begin with you've first got to find your way through the fringe Mythos garbage to the solid core,

the good stuff, and then work outwards.

You see, the Cthulhu Mythos has no real beginning and no real end: "Its geneesis lies in the unthinkable abysses of the past, its end nowhere in sight. Like the cockroach They were here before man, and They will antedate man. Why, They were sleeping between the stars like cosmic pus before the sun spewed out her molten children to form the Solar System, and They will live on when Sol is the merest cinder. Do not attempt to measure Their lifespans in terms of human life, nor even geologically. Measure them rather in the births and deaths of universes, which to Them are like the ticking of vast clocks!" That's from a story I'm writing, if you'll excuse me indulging myself, and it just about sums up the way I feel about the whole Mythos. Any single story is a mere chapter, a paragraph in "The Great Cthulhu Mythos Book". That's what I meant by a challenge: how do you write a story with no beginning and no end?

SB: So presumably you don't think there is any end in sight to the potential of the Mythos insofar as your own stories go, but do you intend to concentrate on them in the future, or have you anything else in mind?

BL: The Cthulhu Mythos, as I've said, is limitless. So is the entire macabre field. So, I suppose, is all fiction. I do intend to do other things - I am doing them right now - but I'll always return to the Mythos when I think I have a good tale to tell.

SB: Your first few stories, and your first book, were published by Arkham House - how did this come about?

BL: In Berlin (late 1967, I think) I wrote several tales, Mythos and others, and sent them to August Derleth at Arkham House because they were Mythos orientated in the main. Most of what Derleth read he liked and bought. I had no agent, no other contact with the genre, I was not even a part of fandom. I was the beginningest beginner. Derleth took me under his literary wing and aimed me in the right direction.

SB: Many authors remember August Derleth with a great deal of respect and affection for the assistance and attention that he was evidently always prepared to give - from what you have just said, this applies for you as well?

BL: You didn't mention all the crummy ghouls who waited till after he died before they dared tell the world what a bum he was! Listen - I didn't know I could write and Derleth told me I could. He said to me: "Yes, there's a little Lovecraft in you - watch how you use it. But do use it - don't let it use you. Then, later when you've got HPL out of your system, that's when you'll really write!"

That was at a time when I needed just such a pat on the back. I don't like doing things by half and AMD knew it. If I wasn't going to make it, then I wasn't even going to try. He gave me a push when I might have stopped. Well, I haven't made it yet - but I haven't stopped either. Thank August Derleth for that - or blame him, if you like...

SB: One of the intriguing aspects of your second book, THE BURROWERS BENEATH, was the successful way in which you incorporated two of your previous short stories - Cement Surroundings and The Night 'Sea-Maid' Went Down - within the framework of the novel, even though they were apparently unconnected, apart from the Mythos theme. When you wrote the stories, did you have any intention of subsequently including them in a novel?

BL: I had no intention originally of incorporating Cement Surroundings and 'Sea-Maid' into a longer work, but since I wanted to write a Shudde-M'ell novel, and since both these stories had elements I wished to include in the novel - well, why not use them as complete chapters and build the rest of the thing around them?

SB: And what about The Sister City which formed part of BENEATH THE MOORS?

BL: The Sister City was a long novelette in first draft, which I butchered down to about one-third of its size for TALES OF THE CTHULHU MYTHOS. BENEATH THE MOORS let me expand the theme to encompass all of the original work and a lot more beside. It's a short novel, but I enjoyed writing it and still get a lot of satisfaction from it. And it's selling well too...

SB: The trend in BENEATH THE MOORS was away from the Cthulhu Mythos. I found it refreshing



Hunter

THE SISTER CITY

and very enjoyable. Did you find yourself consciously trying to abandon most of the Cthuloid apparatus that had appeared regularly in previous short work and the previous novel? And did you find it harder or easier to write than THE BURROWERS BENEATH?

BL: BENEATH THE MOORS was written before BURROWERS! No conscious attempt to abandon the Mythos, simply to elaborate on a story, The Sister City, which I never considered "complete" as first published. It had lost about 10,000 words when it appeared in TALES OF THE CTHULHU MYTHOS; so I gave it 35,000 back! Also, I wanted to write a subterranean adventure, which is what BENEATH THE MOORS is.

SB: Talking about BENEATH THE MOORS, that title is confusingly similar to THE BURROWERS BENEATH, yet unrelated. How did that arise?

BL: BENEATH THE MOORS was written first, then lay around Arkham House for a long time. BURROWERS came straight out of the list of books "written by Robert Blake" in The Haunter of the Dark. I suppose in retrospect that it was rather confusing to title the two novels so similarly, but I personally am happy with them the way they are. I don't think there's any harm done. It's worth it for curiosity value alone. In fact BURROWERS, I've just learned, is to be reprinted in France.

SB: And yet none of your books have yet been published in England. Do you deliberately aim at the American market with your work, or is there really no outlet or potential in this country?

BL: I think that many English publishers suffer from the "English Disease": they wait for things to happen instead of making them happen. The Americans have the right idea: give it a spin and if it works do it again. If it keeps working, keep doing it. In England you need to be a Ray Bradbury or Bob Heinlein or something. Maybe there's hope, though; I see that Ramsey Campbell's first paperback is out. He deserves good luck with a very good book.

SB: How do you set about writing?

BL: I don't think anyone can really tell you how they "set about" writing. I don't know. It's mainly spontaneous. I get an idea and put it down on paper. If it grows I nurture it. If it dies I let it rot a while, then see what's sprouting in the muck. I revise perhaps twenty percent of all I write before the publishers see it, about ten percent after.

SB: You have often expressed an admiration for HPL. Which other authors do you think might have influenced you?

BL: Most of the old Mythos authors have had some sort of influence upon me - the Lovecraft Circle writers, I mean - but I also owe a lot to H. R. Haggard and A. E. Merritt.

SB: Could you tell us your three or four favourite novels and stories?

BL: Yes. My favorite story: Shadow over Innsmouth. Closely followed by Colour out of Space, Call of Cthulhu and The Haunter of the Dark. All Lovecraft, yes. Novel: DWELLERS IN THE MIRAGE and THE MOON POOL by Merritt. And anything by Haggard...

SB: What about your own work - any favorite there?

BL: I like Haggopian and, though I'm probably a minority of one, The Mirror of Nitocris. Oh, yes, and I'll take a chance beforehand and say that SPAWN OF THE WIND will be a well-liked novel. I like it as well as anything I've done - all 110,000 words of it!

SB: Are you working on anything at present? I assume that there will be a sequel to THE TRANSITION OF TITUS CROW and do you have anything else in mind?

BL: I am indeed almost finished with the sequel to TRANSITION: DE MARIIGNY'S DREAM-QUEST. About 60,-65,000 words. It completes the BURROWERS, TRANSITION, DREAM-QUEST trilogy. After that I have the first four chapters in rough draft of an Sf comedy called ALIAS HOOKMAN OR THE CHROMIUM-PLATED CHROME.

SB: To return to the Mythos and your development of it, do you not think that in THE BURROWERS BENEATH you may have raised the Mythos beyond believability, in the literary sense, when you brought it out so much into the open as part of the plot? For instance, the fact that the government officials were well aware of the "Old Ones"?

BL: I see it as a natural and logical step that if the Cthulhu Cycle Deities were real, sooner or later the intelligent men who oppose them would have to bring them to the attention of intelligent government officials. If you discover a dangerous enemy agent who plots the destruction of your country, you don't just ignore him and keep the secret to yourself, do you? The Cthulhu Cycle Deities threaten the world, the universe, all space and time!

SB: In BURROWERS you also equate Azathoth, the primal chaos, to the "Big Bang" theory of the evolution of the universe. I thought this to be a marvellous touch, but it may be construed as an attempt to diemise the Mythos, in part, into the realms of Cosmology. Would you agree with this?

BL: People talk about Lovecraft's "cosmic vision". Now I didn't call Azathoth the "nuclear chaos", HPL did. I only asked myself what he meant, and chose an answer that sounded right. I mean, think of it: "An amorphous blight of nethermost confusion blaspheming and bubbling at the centre of all infinity!" No, I'm dismissing nothing nowhere, but I'm just not about to let the Mythos stagnate. The Cthulhu Mythos is, after all, only a colossal collection of ideas, and you can elaborate on all ideas. And listen: there are dozens of dangling threads, foetal ideas that HPL left to fatten in the womb of the Mythos. You can find them in almost any story of HPL's. I've only utilized a few - so far!

SB: A group of your stories, some in the Mythos, others not, revolve around a sea theme - The Night 'Sea-Maid' Went Down, Rising with Surtsey, Deep-Sea Conch, The Cyprus Shell and Haggonian readily spring to mind. Do you see them as perhaps a separate offshoot of your horror themes, perhaps even a contender for your ehort Mythos work? You obviously take an interest in marine life and this hobby reflects in your horror fiction.

BL: I've always loved the sea. I was born on the north-east coast of England, lived there until I was twenty-one years old, always within sight of the sea. In Cyprus I had the sea and the sun! Spear-fishing, skin-diving, all the sea's creatures just beyond the glass of my face-mask. But Cyprus spoiled it for me, really. Losing the Mediterranean was like losing an eye. I doubt if there'll be any more real sea stories from my pen.

SB: Do you hold any beliefs in the supernatural? Do you hold that Lovecraft was a pure materialist, or in some way an unconscious occultist?

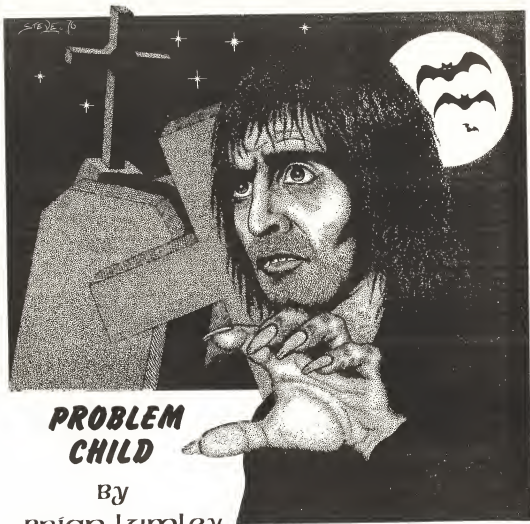
BL: I don't believe in the supernatural, no. As for what Lovecraft was: how can you categorize a character as complex as his? I don't like putting people in slots. Lovecraft was Lovecraft. He was also the greatest macabre author in the world. I will be very, very surprised - and delighted - if a comparable horror writer emerges in my lifetime.

SB: Over the past few years there has been a tremendous upsurge in interest in the occult and with it all the various offshoots - I'm thinking of the whole range of mysterious things from UFO's, the Bermuda Triangle, to ancient but advanced civilizations - and it seems almost natural that Lovecraft should be roped in, although were he alive, he would no doubt declaim all such "Fortean" phenomena. Do you feel Lovecraft has become an occult figure because of certain "presumed" truths in his fiction, or because his fiction merely reflects or fits in with certain esoteric beliefs?

BL: HPL went to great pains to make his horror, particularly his "supernatural" horror, seem real. It seemed that he knew what he was talking about - which of course was exactly the way he planned it! The occult freaks who see him as an unconscious occultist or cult-figure or whatever are perhaps influenced by these tricks of Lovecraft's. Like when, for instance, in CHARLES DEXTER WARD, he quotes "Dies Mies Jeschet Boene Deseef Douven: Init-emaus", which your average occult buff will of course recognize. After that first step it's easy to believe that HPL had "access" to all sorts of "forbidden" volumes. If I write fifty lines of gibberish and include a couple of "esoteric" lines from one of the scow-

ledged "Black Books", who is to say how much of what I've written is junk and how much authentic? After all, to anyone in ignorance of my system, it is quite demonstrable that some of my work is "genuine". What about the rest? Do I know something you don't know? Lovecraft was a great psychologist.

★ ★ ★



PROBLEM CHILD

By
Brian Lumley

My symptoms, Dr. Trent said, were those of developing schizophrenia, split personality, but I could "counter such tendencies by recording details of them diary-wise, or by talking to myself about them, thus recognizing and resolving the peculiarities of my dualism when controlled by my more 'normal' archetype." Ye Gods! Do they all talk like that, I wonder? Still, he sounded like he knew what he was talking about, and so -

Since my hands weren't much for writing, I started to talk to myself. And you know, his idea was all right in a way; that is, chatting to myself about it did seem to help - initially. But now, well, I don't see old Trent anymore, I haven't for a long, long time.

Wonder how he's getting on. Trent the quack - the so-called "psychiatrist" - the head-shrinker. I should never have taken my problem to him in the first place...

My "problem"!

I suspect that old Trent was laughing at me really, that he never did believe me. Even then, though, I could have proved the things I told him...if I had really wanted to. I could have cut my nails for him - and then stayed around while they grew again!

"Six times a day?" I remember him asking. "You cut your nails six times a day? Well, they look perfectly normal nails to me!"

And it was true, they were perfectly normal nails - to look at! But they simply grew too fast. They still do; in fact the speed at which they grow has increased! Until recently I was cutting them up to eight times daily. Now I just don't bother. And I remember how, if I slept for more than three hours at a stretch...

It's murder to wake up and find your nails long and black and - hooked!

And I used to worry about getting jackets to fit my hump; but knowing what I know now - well, who needs jackets?

My hump: I remember when I was a kid, just a little kid, how my friends used to say I had a small hump. Now I have a big hump. I once went for treatment for curvature of the spine...Hah! There's a laugh. "Curvature of the spine," indeed! It made life hell at the orphanage though.

Of course in those days I didn't have my fingernails - toenail thing. That didn't start until I was out of my teens, till after I left the orphanage, and even then the growth rate wasn't much in the beginning. Like the hair. I remember when I first started to shave my chin. What's more, I remember when I started shaving my body!

You should try to imagine the difficulty living when you can't go out in public for more than two or three hours at a stretch. Life was not easy. In the end I got a job as a nightwatchman...

By then I had given up shaving my chest, arms, and legs; I simply concentrated on my face. This was so that I could sit by my nightwatchman's brazier in those hours when the last drunks are going home without attracting too much attention. In the quieter hours of the night I would shave again, as often I needed it, and I'd also cut my nails, which had been bothering me for some time by then.

It's really surprising how many nightwatchmen have humps...

I lived in a boardinghouse. A sleazy place moldering on the outskirts of the city. I had a room on the ground floor, and I could sneak out unnoticed when I wanted to. Not that that was very often; rarely during daylight. It was all too much. All that shaving and cutting...and creaming.

Creaming! Have I mentioned my skin? No, I haven't mentioned my skin. Well, that didn't begin until after all my other little blemies were well-established. My skin started to rough over.

Rough over? - regular ichthyosis, it was - like psoriasis gone rampant, with knobs on! I had to cream the skin on my face over before I could do anything or go anywhere. I used a skin-colored cream, a "woman's preparation", which did the job pretty well. Makes you wonder, though, what lurks beneath the surface of some of those dolly faces in the girlie magazines, doesn't it?

Of course, in the early days, I saw a doctor about it (a real doctor, as opposed to old Trent) but he could do nothing - except fill useless prescriptions. After a few visits he wouldn't even see me. I don't think he liked my bad breath.

The whole thing reached a head some six months back when I started to go off my food. Up until then I could fancy almost anything - eggs, fish, beans - anything I could cook up for myself or get out of a can. It started when I got sick every time I ate something. Soon it had reached a stage where I would open a can and gag at the very smell of the contents, no matter what. I remember leaving a can of chopped steak lying around open and untouched for over a week. I was living on bread and water by then, but even so I was still sick sometimes. On the ninth day I ate the steak straight out of the can. I wasn't sick! I ate stinking, rotten steak for a long time before it dawned on me to come and live here. By then it had also dawned on me what was "wrong" with me.

It's simply this: there's nothing wrong with me!

I mean, just think about it: hands spade-shaped and hard as hell, for digging; a mouth (have I mentioned my mouth?) like a sucker, for slurping up soft stuff; big square teeth - I've always had them - for grinding hard stuff; flaky, blotched skin and black tufts of coarse hair all over my body, matching up perfectly with the shadows and mottled background of my natural habitat...

Yes, natural - for me!

I remember (it seems like years ago) a record by someone who used to sing Country and Western songs. It was about a boy named Sue, and how that boy hunted down his father for giving him a girl's name. I, too, will hunt down my father. One night I'll leave this place and hunt him down. I'll find him, and there and then I'll kill him with my claw hands and suck him up with my sucker mouth, and grind him with my strong, square teeth.

My mother, too.

Oh, they didn't call me Sue. They didn't call me anything, just left me on the doorstep of an orphanage. Was I so - abnormal? Did I look so - freakish? They could have hid me, brought me along until I fitted in with them. Or perhaps there were others with them who wouldn't allow it, who feared that my presence (I imagine I made a pretty human-looking baby) might attract the attention of...people!

They couldn't afford that, I suppose. After all, it's only recently, so to speak, that people have stopped believing in my kind. My race has all but died out in the minds of men; like fairies and vampires and werewolves - but I know we're real!

Yes, one night I'll go away from here and make my way in the shadows to another place. It'll need to be soon for there's no food here now. Perhaps I'll pick up a couple of night-watchmen on the way! And when we've cleaned the next place out, then we'll move on again. And one night I'll find my father.

Oh! - I'll find him, all right. One night. Sooner or later. I'll find him...

After all, there aren't all that many graveyards...

3~a BIBLIOGRAPHY, with autoBIOGRAPHICAL notes By BRIAN LUMLEY

1. PUBLISHED BOOKS

THE CALLER OF THE BLACK; Arkham House 1971. (Collection of short stories). Contents: A Thing About Cars; The Cyprus Shell; Billy's Oak; The Writer in the Garret; The Caller of the Black; The Mirror of Nitocris; The Night the 'Sea-Maid' Went Down; The Thing from the Blasted Heath; An Item of Supporting Evidence; Dylath-Leen; De Marigny's Clock; Ambler's Inspiration; In the Vaults Beneath; The Pearl.

THE BURROWERS BENEATH; Daw Books 1974. (A novel, incorporating the short stories Cement Surroundings and The Night the 'Sea-Maid' Went Down).

BENEATH THE MOORS; Arkham House 1974. (A novel, incorporating the short story The Sister City).

THE TRANSITION OF TITUS CROW; Daw Books 1975. (A novel).

2. FORTHCOMING BOOKS

DE MARIGNY'S DREAM-QUEST. (A novel, incorporating the short story Dylath-Leen).

THE HORROR AT OAKDENE AND OTHERS. (Collection of short stories). Contents: The Viking's Stone; Aunt Hester; No Way Home; The Horror at Oakdene; The Cleaner Woman; The Statement of Henry Worthy; Darynd's Doll; Born of the Winds.

SPAWN OF THE WINDS. (A novel, but no longer incorporating the short story Born of the Winds as mentioned previously).

3. PUBLISHED STORIES (Date and place of first publication only is shown).

Ambler's Inspiration (THE CALLER OF THE BLACK 1971) Written Feb 1968.

An Item of Supporting Evidence (THE CALLER OF THE BLACK 1971) Written Aug 1968.
A Thing About Cars (THE CALLER OF THE BLACK 1971) Written Jun 1969.
Aunt Hester (THE SATYR'S HEAD & OTHER TALES OF TERROR 1975) Written Dec 1971.
Bensath the Moors (novel, 1974) Written 1969/70.
Billy's Oak (THE ARKHAM COLLECTOR Winter 1970) Written Mar 1968.
Born of the Wind (THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION Dec 1975) Written Nov 1972
 - Jan 1973.
The Burrowers Beneath (novel, 1974, first chapter having appeared in HPL, 1973)
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The Caller of the Black (THE CALLER OF THE BLACK 1971) Written Aug 1967.
Cement Surroundings (TALES OF THE CTHULHU MYTHOS 1973) Written Jun 1967.
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David's Worm (YEARS BEST HORROR STORIES 2 1972) Written Oct 1969.
The Deep-Sea Conch (DARK THINGS 1971) Written May 1970.
De Mariigny's Clock (THE CALLER OF THE BLACK 1971) Written May-Jun 1969.
Dylath-Leen (THE CALLER OF THE BLACK 1971) Written Mar 1969.
Heggonian (THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION Jun 1973) Written Jul 1970.
The House of Cthulhu (WHISPERS Jul 1973) Written Nov 1971.
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The Last Rite (1st chapter of round-robin "Hetaunum!" in WITCHCRAFT & SORCERY)
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 II) Written May 1968.
Mother Love (WITCHCRAFT & SORCERY May 1971) Written Jan 1968.
The Night the 'Sea-Maid' Went Down (THE CALLER OF THE BLACK 1971) Written Dec 1969.
Nitocris' Mirror (THE CALLER OF THE BLACK 1971, as The Mirror of Nitocris)
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The Pearl (THE CALLER OF THE BLACK 1971) Written Feb-Mar 1969.
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Dark) Written Feb 1971.
Rising With Surtsey (DARK THINGS 1971) Written Spring 1968.
The Sister City (TALES OF THE CTHULHU MYTHOS 1973) Written Nov 1967.
The Thing from the Blasted Heath (THE CALLER OF THE BLACK 1971) Written Sep 1967.
The Transition of Titus Crow (novel, 1975) Written 1973.
What Dark God? (NAMELESS PLACES 1975) Written Apr 1968.
The Writer in the Garret (THE CALLER OF THE BLACK 1971) Written Sep 1967.

4. FORTHCOMING STORIES

The Cleaner Woman (THE HORROR AT OAKDENE & OTHERS and possible future Hugh Lamb collec-
 tion) Written Feb 1973.
Darghad's Doll (THE HORROR AT OAKDENE & OTHERS) Written Apr 1973.
The Dark Wisdom (IS, fansine) Written 1972.
De Mariigny's Dream-Quest (novel) Written 1975.
The Fairground Horror (DISCIPLES OF CTHULHU, Daw Books) Written Apr-May 1972.
The Girl with Toilet-Roll Eyes, Written Jan 1975.
The Horror at Oakdene (THE HORROR AT OAKDENE & OTHERS) Written 1970.
How Kank-Thad Returned to Bhur-Esh, Written Aug 1970, reworked Feb 1976.
In the Glow Zone (for use in future Hugh Lamb collection) Written Jun 1973.
The Life of Bugz-Shash (sequel to David Sutton's Demoniacal) Written Mar 1973.
The Man Who Photographed Beardsley (future STAR HORROR) Written Feb 1974.
Snarker's Son (FRIGHTS) Written Sep 1970.
Spawn of the Winds (novel) Written 1974.
The Statement of Henry Worthy (THE HORROR AT OAKDENE & OTHERS) Written Sep 1967.
Tharquest and the Lamia Orbiquita (WARRIOR BREED and FANTASTIC) Written Aug 1970.
The Ugly Act, Written Dec 1974.
Vansassa's Voice (WHISPERS) Written Apr 1972.
The Viaduct (SUPERHORROR) Written Nov 1974.
The Viking's Stone (THE HORROR AT OAKDENE & OTHERS) Written Aug 1970.
The Whisperer (FRIGHTS) Written Feb 1974.
Zack Phalanx is Vlad the Impaler!, Written Aug 1974.



AUNT HESTER

5. POETRY

A Cry at Night (MIDNIGHT FANTASIES).

Enough! (THE ARKHAM COLLECTOR Winter 1971).

In Pressure-Founded Chasms (THE ARKHAM COLLECTOR Spring 1971).

Pesh-Tlen (NYCTALOPS Apr 1973).

The Shadow Man (possibly in HPL Supplement no.2, forthcoming).

Bibliographical note by Brian Lumley: Years ago I used to do stuff for the fanzines. This was when I was aged, oh, 14-17. I had art and poetry in some British zines, like NEZFEZ and CAMBER, even in the American zines, PEON and others. Recently the Coulsons ran a drawing of mine in a mag of theirs that they must have had on ice for something like 17-18 years! Oh, yes, and Marvel Comics had bought a Crow and de Marigny script for their (hold it) DRACULA LIVES comic. Stone the (Titus) Crows!

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTES By BRIAN LUMLEY

Was born 2nd December 1937 (nine months after HPL died) but doesn't believe in reincarnation. He gets asked that one so many times that it's reflex for him now to spout the stock answer right from square one... He couldn't be less like Lovecraft, despite the fact that he loves all things Lovecraftian.

He served an apprenticeship and earned all honours as a Sawyer, but packed it in age 21 to join the army. In his teens he did artwork for the fanzines (and "poetry"), becoming interested in the Cthulhu Mythos in his early 20s (but see introduction to BENEATH THE MOORS). He was married before he was 21; now has three children, girl, boy, girl, sixteen, thirteen, ten in that order, by his wife. And a budgie, not by his wife! Latter's name (budgie) is Socrates, 'cos he couldn't get his beak around "Cthulhu"!

Brian Lumley intends to write forever - or until time catches up with him. He will bend away from the Mythos eventually, into fantasy proper and SF, but he will always return on occasion when good Mythos ideas occur. He loves the Mythos, but can't bear certain loud-mouthed, so-called "authorities" which, he says, in later lives - if he believed in reincarnation - could only inhabit stagnant pools!

He believes that the Devil is alive and well in the World today, but that his chief adversary is ahead on points. Brian's ideal lifestyle would be writing six hours a day; hang-gliding two-and-a-half hours; skin-diving two-and-a-half hours; sleeping eight hours; answering letters, eating, relaxing and all the rest in the remaining time.

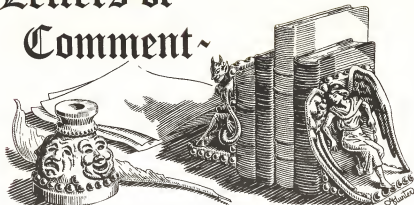
He can't bear astrology, trips, and people who mess his life about. And red tape...

He loves Robert E. Howard, Lovecraft, budgies, his wife, three kids, kite-soaring, his typewriter, fish and chips, coke and BRANDY! Anyone who drops in on him without a bottle of the latter (any brand) is NOT welcome! He'll supply the booze! He drinks the two together in equal parts.

Brian is now 38; with luck and fair winds - given that his hang-glider remains robust and he doesn't fall prey to the dreaded grape - he will see 40!



Letters of Comment ~



From, JIM PITTS, Blackburn Lancashire:

A pity my illo on the cover reproduced 'light'. I can't grumble though, as very little detail has been lost (an affliction my illustrations invariably suffer from...).

The rest of the artwork scattered thru the pages of this issue (my own aside) is nothing short of excellent! Gold stars for the illos on pages 16, 22, and 23 - Steve Fabian, Steve Jones and Alan Hunter respectively. The latter illo especially deserves a prize; the conception of design smacks of genius! If the gold goes to the above then Russ Nicholson must have the silver for his interpretation of Simon Cunsley's story The Ghost, The Bottle & Paradise. Russ' characterisation of Blitt etc are perfect! If America has Tim Kirk with his, whimsical, humorous but grim characters, then we have the same qualities, though not in the least derivative, in Mr Nicholson!

Michael Sims' article made a lot of sense. I know that speaking from the art side, as opposed to the literary (the end is different but circumstances and time spent are probably something similar) my professional occupation certainly interferes to a certain degree with my output. Many is the illo that has been conceived at home at leisure and worked out, in rough on scraps of paper in spare moments during the 12 hour night/day shifts which circumstances dictate that I work. It may be interesting to note that the illustration which adorns the cover of DH13, Innsmouth, was conceived and worked out, more or less to the last detail, to the clatter of textile production machines! A scene which couldn't be more removed from the romantic image of the writer and artist as pointed out by Michael!

The remaining articles and departments were all up to the usual DH standard. Adrian's series especially, has been a treat to follow over the months (helped of course by a personal appearance at Fantasycon 2).

Dave Sutton's article was informative and interesting. Especially if one does not have the relevant books on this particular artist. Personally, I find M. C. Escher's work cold and without feeling, though his mathematical and technical brilliance, amazes...

Not too thrilled with the poetry; but again the poems themselves aren't anything to really get your teeth into...

From: WAYNE WARFIELD, Aberdeen U.S.A.:

As a recent honorary member of the BPS, I felt it essential that I comment on DARK HORIZONS 13: As with all past issues which I've seen, I find your unlucky 13 to be an excellent issue. In fact, it remains one of the best zines on either side of the pond. It shines with tight editing, good printing, appropriate art and interesting features.

As much as I like Steve Fabian, we see much of him here. My delight in DH13 is Jim Pitts. A fine, imaginative artist with much originality. All of your artists are exceptionally good, but Nicholson also stands out.

To the actual features, I find it hard to get into editorials that largely recount the contents. I've done it myself, and it's an easy thing to fall into. Personal commentary,

tho, is better whenever possible.

Influences in Horror Fiction was excellent. I think Sims brought up some valid ideas, and related them in a smooth manner. Good reading for fans of horror, or even just fiction in general.

The Ghost, The Bottle & Paradise was extremely well done until the conclusion, which drifted off to nothing. I felt cheated; but I'm sure Cunsley has much potential.

Part 3 of Adrian Cole's survey was of much interest, as were the earlier sections. Accurate and tight journalism, with thought provoking opinion. I do not agree with all of his conclusions; but they are of interest.

Descent had its moments, but the plot was not original enough to leave any impression on me.

The Sutton and Barrett articles were very well written, but were only of passing interest to me personally. Which, of course, is no reflection on the merits of either author.

The Dallazuel Rift did nothing for me either. I found the tale uninteresting.

I also confess to not being a fan of verse; tho I do feel that it has a place in any Fantasy sine.

I enjoyed your letter column, tho a good controversy or two might liven it up a bit. I take it that your feedback has been poor re LoC's by your comments?

Overall, I enjoyed DHI3, and look forward to future issues.

From, GAYNOR CHAPMAN, Leicester:

The artwork contributed by Russell Nicholson has movement and feeling to it; Stephen Fabian's work is also impressive, although page 16 immediately brought to mind not only Tarzan but the Hunchback of Notre Dame and the Jungle Book! The illustration to my poem by Stephen Jones I found quite stunning, my only criticism being that I have yet to find an octopus in a rock pool, the latter being the actual setting of the poem. The back cover by David Lloyd is far superior to the front cover.

The Ghost, The Bottle & Paradise is the most refreshing story I have read for a long time, an interesting blend of fantasy, sci-fi and fairy tale. The style is original and the writer's sense of humour creeps in now and again, adding an extra dimension. A parallel can be drawn with this story and Descent, both having a moral to them. However, Descent does not stand out as a fantasy story in its own right, unlike The Ghost, The Bottle & Paradise with its more fantastic (which is not to say better) setting. Incidentally, it makes a change to come across a fantasy story with a moral.

The Dallazuel Rift with its over-ornate imagery did very little to move me apart from the odd phrase eg: "Eid unlistening and strolling locally...", but other lengthy descriptions left me literally gasping for breath, as the writer appears to abandon punctuation in times of excitement.

Marion Pitman's poem provokes the right atmosphere, although I would hardly have used the words "fear not". Stephen Walker's poem is also heavy with doom.

Influences in Horror Fiction is a clearly-written piece; the article on Escher is also satisfying.

Overall, DHI3 makes rewarding reading, although I wish people wouldn't use the word 'nice' in reviews.





From, JEAN SHEWARD, Berleyheath Kent:

Adrian Cole's article on HF must have been fascinating if Part 3 is anything to go by. Too often this sort of thing becomes a mere list of names and titles. I'm still trying to work out how Cole got round the problem but as yet I haven't found the joins.

Michael Sims' horror piece on the other hand, I found decidedly vague and wooly. He seemed to wander around in circles for quite a while without getting anywhere. I disagree with much of what he says. Films very rarely follow the storyline of the books on which they are based so I seldom have any difficulty in disassociating the two media. In telling a story (written or filmed), the author should be able to create that 'willing suspension of disbelief' which involves the reader to the exclusion of all other thoughts. If it doesn't succeed in holding the attention then it isn't a good story - regardless of what the writer had for breakfast or whether the reader once saw a vaguely similar film in a draughty cinema. Since the whole question of how imagination works is an intensely personal one Michael Sims is rather shouting in a void.

Escher's work is intriguing; Dave Sutton certainly brought that aspect of it out. A pity

that the drawings he referred to weren't illustrated (copyright I presume?), but the atmosphere came over well. ((Although I wanted to use those illustrations Dave mentioned in his article, they would not have reproduced very well; so reluctantly I had to include a selection of Escher's artwork that would look best in DH. SJ)).

Which leaves the poetry:- 10 for effort. You're right, it's a neglected art as far as Fantasy is concerned, or isn't all poetry fantastic?

And the fiction:- I enjoyed Ounsley's The Ghost, The Bottle & Paradise. It had flaws of course (as has every Rolle Royce, nothing's perfect), I found the ending a little too rushed and slightly clumsy and some of the names seemed over-contrived but overall I liked it. I can't say the same for The Dallazuel Rift which was so predictable I was sure there'd be a twist at the end. There wasn't (which I suppose was a twist in itself), altogether very disappointing.

Almost forgot the artwork. As far as I'm concerned Steve Fabian can do no wrong. Russell Nicholson's style was perfect for the Ounsley story. Everything I see of his is better than the last time.

From, MARION PITTMAN, East Molesey Surrey:

Is the cover meant to look so pale and all-overish, or is it the reproduction? (I am not being sarcastic). I won't comment on the ills., except to say I like M. C. Escher, p.34 is repulsive, and your lady looks like a toothpaste ad. (again, I'm not condemning, just remarking).

I see Michael Sims doesn't even contemplate the possibility of a female writer, perhaps with a husband who wants his dinner? However, insignificant details aside; personally I find cinematic images often useful, as I can frequently conjure up no very clear picture from what the author gives me (my imagination is very visual but I'm bothered by a lack of detail; an author has to describe everything minutely before I can get more than the vaguest idea of a scene). I think films can probably be a help as well as a hindrance.

Reading DH I constantly itch to improve and tidy up, not only the spelling and grammar, but clumsy construction, lack of co-ordination, untidy thinking; all the things which could be put right (one would think) by strong-minded rewriting and tightening up by the author. Much of the contents of DH has an air of uncorrected first draft about it.

David Sutton's LoC makes a nice change, in that it actually says something. As for the other letters - well, there seem to be enough people telling you how wonderful DH is, I don't think I need join them. You need me to stop you getting over-optimistic.





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